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THE *WARRIOR*

THE BATTLE OF ALAMEIN WAS THE TURNING POINT OF THE WAR, BUT THAT GREAT VICTORY WAS NOT ACHIEVED WITHOUT A TREMENDOUS SACRIFICE OF HUMAN LIFE. SOME BATTALIONS WERE ALMOST WIPE OUT IN THE GRINDING, NERVE-RACKING ADVANCE THROUGH ENEMY MINEFIELDS IN THE FACE OF A CONCENTRATED BARRAGE . . .

Chapter 1. *Forbidden to Fight*

AS THE ADVANCE FORGED ON ACROSS THE SHELL-TORN DESERT, COLONEL 'BUTCHER' BONNDR RACED ABOUT HIS SECTOR IN A JEEP, DRIVING HIS MEN RUTHLESSLY...

GET YOUR SQUADRON ON TO THAT RIDGE, MAJOR! I KNOW IT'S TOUGH POUNDING, BUT WE'VE GOT TO KEEP PRESSING ON!



AT THE COLONEL'S COMMAND, THE SECOND BATTALION, WEYSHIRE REGIMENT, DROVE ON WITH GRIM DETERMINATION. BUT THE WITHERING HAIL OF FIRE FROM THE GERMAN LINES WAS TAKING A HORRIFYING TOLL...

THEY ARE MADMEN, HORST... MADMEN! OUR MINEFIELD IS KILLING THEM IN THEIR HUNDREDS... AND STILL THEY KEEP ON!



AT LAST, EVEN THE RELENTLESS 'BUTCHER' BONNOR SAW IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO PRESS HOME THE ATTACK UNTIL THE MINEFIELD WAS CLEARED...



WITHIN THIRTY MINUTES, COLONEL BONNOR WAS CALLED TO BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS. HE EXPLAINED WHY HE HAD MADE SUCH A DECISION TO THE BRIGADIER...



THE BRIGADIER LISTENED IN STONY SILENCE. HIS REPLY WAS CURT AND DECISIVE...

I DON'T BELIEVE IN ASKING MY OFFICERS TO PASS ON ORDERS IN WHICH THEY HAVE NO FAITH, BONNOR. YOU WILL BE RELIEVED OF YOUR COMMAND, AS FROM NOW...



'BUTCHER' BONNOR WAS STUNNED. HE FELT LIKE ARGUING, BUT THE STEELY EYES OF THE BRIGADIER SHOWED THAT IT WOULD BE USELESS...



SO, WHILE THE BATTLE THUNDERED TO ITS CLIMAX, 'BUTCHER' BONNOR KICKED HIS HEELS AT BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS, WAITING FOR A PLANE TO FLY HIM BACK TO CAIRO - AND OUT OF THE WAR...



THIS IS THE FINAL TWIST OF IRONY. I'M TO BE BOWL R-HATTED BECAUSE THEY RECKON I'M NOT RUTHLESS ENOUGH AND THEY'VE ALWAYS CALLED ME 'BUTCHER'.

AS HE PACED THE HEADQUARTERS LINES, A STREAM OF WOUNDED ARRIVED BY FIELD AMBULANCE, TO LIE ON STRETCHERS, WAITING FOR PLANES TO FLY THEM BACK TO CAIRO...



SUDDENLY, A SIREN SCREECHED A WARNING. THREE HIGH-FLYING JUNKERS EIGHTY-EIGHTS CAME WHISTLING DOWN. AS THE FIRST STICK OF BOMBS STRUCK WITH SHATTERING EXPLOSIONS, BONNOR'S FIRST THOUGHT WAS FOR THE WOUNDED...



The Warrior

WITH THE GROUND SHUDDERING BENEATH THE TERRIBLE BOMBARDMENT, THE COLONEL HELPED TO CARRY THE WOUNDED TO SHELTER...



BUT AS HE STOOPED TOWARDS ONE STRETCHER, THE OCCUPANT, A YOUNGSTER WITH BITTER EYES, SNAPPED AT HIM...

YOU'RE THE BUTCHER ! I DON'T WANT YOU ANYWHERE NEAR ME, YOU MURDERER !



'BUTCHER' BONNOR COULD ONLY STARE INCREDULOUSLY WHILE THE WOUNDED MAN RAGED AT HIM....



ALL MY MATES
WERE KILLED BEFORE
THEY MOVED TEN
YARDS. I ONLY JUST
ESCAPED... YOU'LL
HAVE EVERY MAN
IN THE REGIMENT
SLAUGHTERED
BEFORE YOU'RE
SATISFIED!



THERE WAS NOTHING BUT HATRED
AND CONTEMPT ON THE YOUNG
SOLDIER'S PAIN-HAGGARD FACE...

YOU OLD OFFICERS ARE
ALL THE SAME. HAVE YOU EVER
HEARD OF A C.O. GETTING
KILLED IN ACTION? NOT LIKELY!
YOUR KIND DIE IN BED!



BONNOR WANTED TO EXPLAIN THAT
HE HAD ONLY DONE HIS DUTY... THAT
HE HAD NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO
ORDER HIS MEN INTO BATTLE UNTIL
THE ODDS PROVED IMPOSSIBLE...



AND YET THE BOY IS RIGHT
IN A WAY... THIS IS THE FIRST
TIME IN MY LIFE I'VE THOUGHT
OF THE COST OF AN ATTACK
IN FLESH AND BLOOD!

The Warrior

BUT BONNOR COULD EXPLAIN NOTHING. IN ANY CASE, THE BOY WOULD NOT HAVE UNDERSTOOD. YET THE YOUNG SOLDIER'S BITTER JIBE WOULD ALWAYS RANKLE ...

MY KIND DIE IN BED!
I SUPPOSE HE'S RIGHT.
NOW, I'LL BE GIVEN A
SOFT JOB. I'M A
HAS BEEN...



BONNOR WAS BEGINNING TO REALISE THAT HE WAS NO LONGER A MAN OF ANY IMPORTANCE... AN AGEING COLONEL, GETTING IN THE WAY...

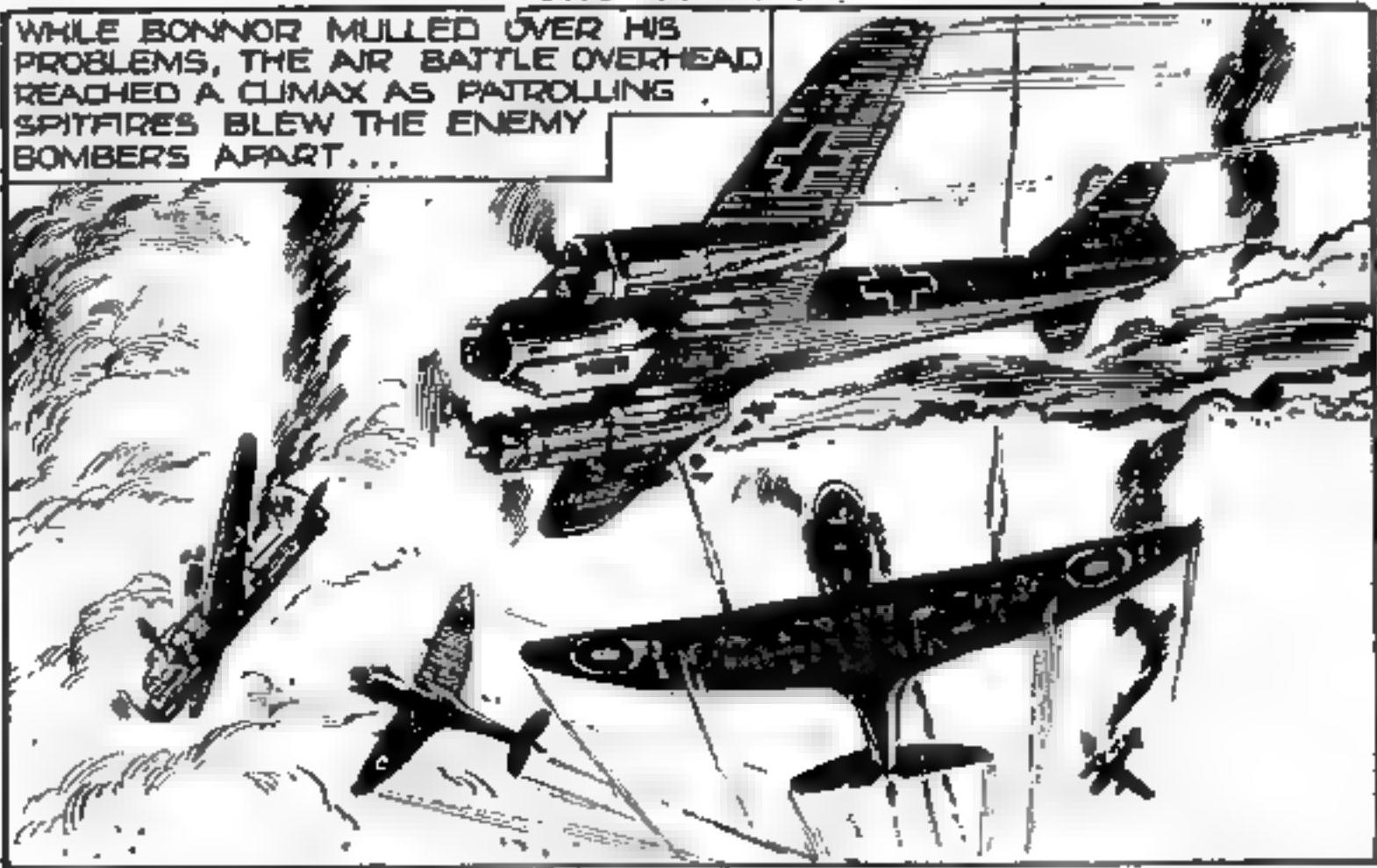
THE
SOONER I
PACK UP, THE
BETTER!



The Warrior

5

WHILE BONNOR MULLED OVER HIS PROBLEMS, THE AIR BATTLE OVERHEAD REACHED A CLIMAX AS PATROLLING SPITFIRES BLEW THE ENEMY BOMBERS APART...



COMPARATIVE QUIET CAME TO THE HEADQUARTERS. THAT NIGHT, BONNOR DINED WITH A GREY-HAIRED MAJOR AT A TABLE APART FROM THE OTHERS...

WE'RE LIKE A COUPLE OF PARIADS / I'M A FAILURE...UNWELCOME.
I WONDER WHAT THIS CHAP IS ?



The Warrior

THE MAJOR GAVE A SURPRISING ANSWER TO THE COLONEL'S QUESTION . . .

I'VE BEEN WITH THE ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT, BUT NOW THEY'RE SENDING ME TO FIJI, SIR !



FIJI ? I KNOW IT WELL / SUVA. I SPENT MY BOYHOOD IN SUVA AND THE ISLANDS... BUT WHAT ARE THEY SENDING YOU THERE FOR ?



COLONEL BONNOR

MAJOR ROBERT LAMBERT SEEMED GLAD TO HAVE SOMEONE TO CONFIDE IN. AND COLONEL BONNOR WAS INTERESTED . . .

MY FATHER IS COLONEL ASHTON LAMBERT. HE'S NEARLY BLIND, NOW, POOR OLD BOY... HAVEN'T SEEN HIM FOR YEARS !



I'M TO RAISE AND TRAIN A NATIVE BATTALION. THE FIJIAN'S WILL MAKE MAGNIFICENT FIGHTERS . . .



FATHER WAS DISAPPOINTED IN ME WHEN I WAS TRANSFERRED TO ORDNANCE BECAUSE OF SHORT SIGHT. I'D HAVE DONE ANYTHING TO MAKE HIM PROUD OF ME. BUT ALL I CAN DO IS TRAIN OTHER MEN TO FIGHT.



'BUTCHER' BONNOR FELT A TWINGE OF SYMPATHY FOR THE MAJOR. HERE WAS ANOTHER SOLDIER WHO WOULD DIE IN BED.

THE OF WAS SOMETHING ELSE ABOUT LAMBERT - HE WAS OLD FOR AN OFFICER. BY THE MARSH STANDARDS OF WAR AND SO WAS ME 'BUTCHER' BONNOR.



Chapter 2. Change of Identity

THAT NIGHT, A YOUNG PILOT-OFFICER LANDED HIS TRANSPORT PLANE AT HEADQUARTERS, AND WAITED IMPATIENTLY FOR COLONEL BONNOR AND MAJOR LAMBERT.

IF WE DON'T GET TO CAIRO DURING THE NIGHT, WE'LL BE A SITTING DUCK FOR ANY STRAY JERRY FIGHTER. JUST MY LUCK TO GET THE CHOPPER FLYING A COUPLE OF DEADBEATS BACK TO BASE!



IT WAS STILL DARK WHEN 'THE BUTCHER' WAS WAKENED, BUT DAWN WAS NOT FAR OFF...

THE PLANE IS HERE, SIR! I'VE GOT YOU SOME BREAKFAST!

THANKS.
I'LL BE OUT
SOON!

THE PILOT WAS BECOMING MORE AND MORE IMPATIENT...

IF THEY WANT TO GET SHOT UP IN BROAD DAYLIGHT THEY'RE GOING THE RIGHT WAY ABOUT IT!



AT THE LAST MINUTE, THE BUTCHER FOUND HE HAD FORGOTTEN HIS DIARY...

I MUST GET IT! WON'T BE LONG...

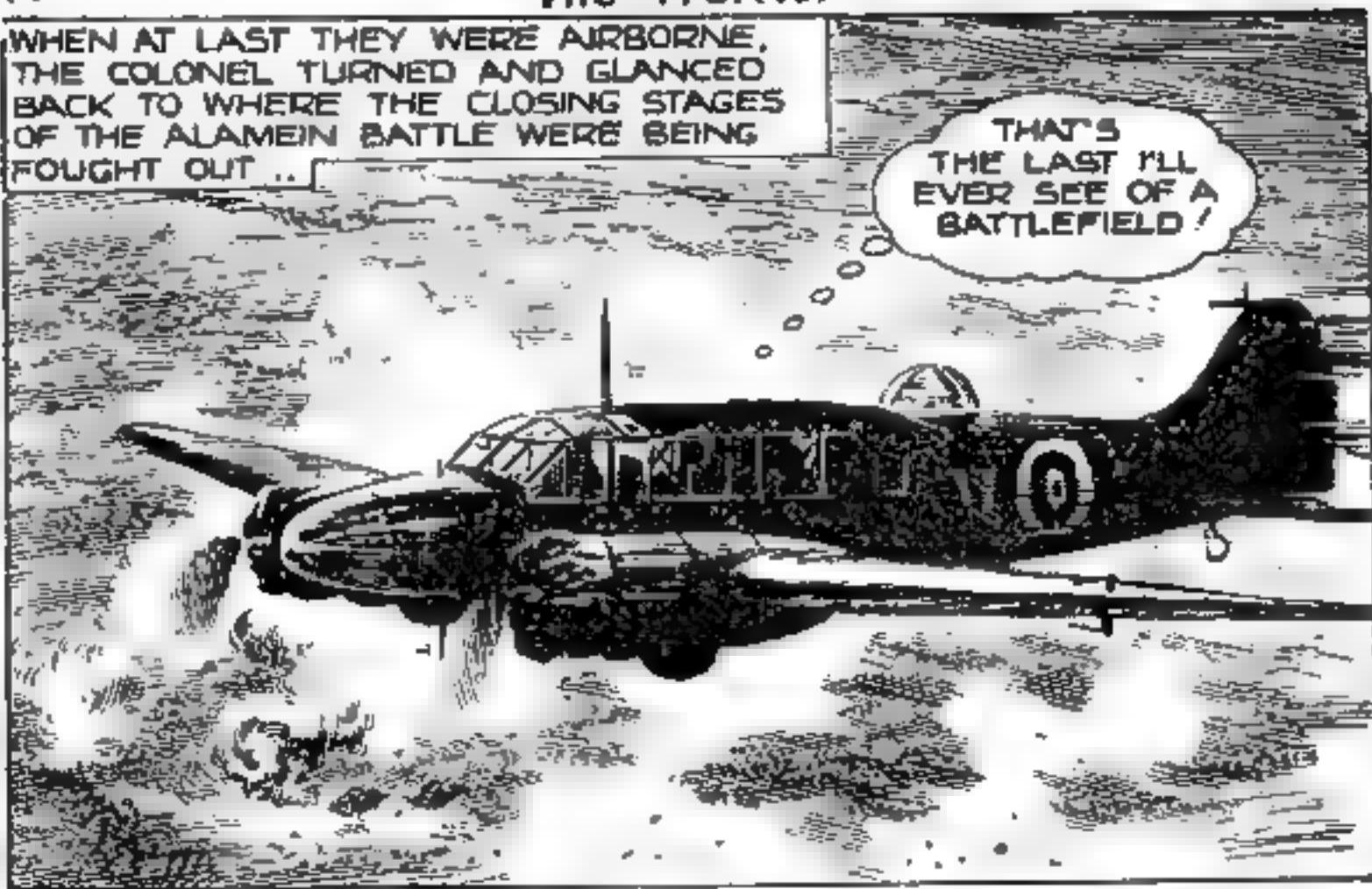
OLD IDIOT! WELL, WE'RE STUCK WITH A DAYLIGHT HOP NOW. I'LL HAVE TO KEEP CLEAR OF THE USUAL ROUTES.



The Warrior

WHEN AT LAST THEY WERE AIRBORNE,
THE COLONEL TURNED AND GLANCED
BACK TO WHERE THE CLOSING STAGES
OF THE ALAMEIN BATTLE WERE BEING
FOUGHT OUT . . .

THAT'S
THE LAST I'LL
EVER SEE OF A
BATTLEFIELD!

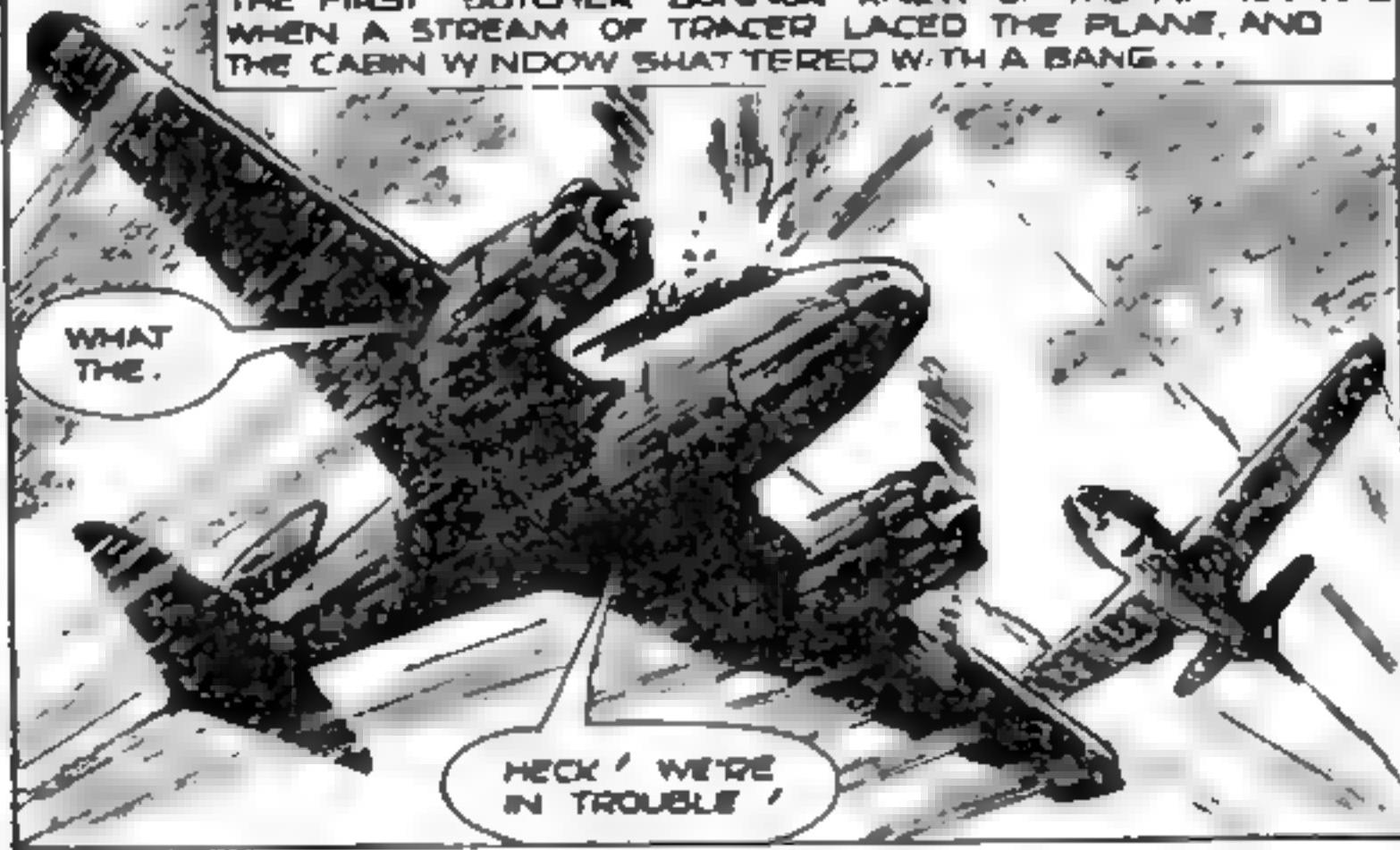


THE PILOT TOOK A WIDE DETOUR
TO THE SOUTH. IT WAS A MISTAKE,
FOR A MARAUDING MESSERSCHMITT
SPOTTED THE ANSON . . .

ENGLANDER
TRANSPORT PLANE!
THIS IS TOO
EASY!



THE FIRST 'BUTCHER' BONNOR KNEW OF THE ATTACK WAS WHEN A STREAM OF TRACER LACED THE PLANE, AND THE CABIN WINDOW SHATTERED WITH A BANG...



ANOTHER BURST SLAMMED THROUGH THE THIN WALL OF THE COCKPIT, AND THE PILOT SLAGGED ACROSS THE STICK...



The Warrior

THE COLONEL FELT THE PLANE LURCH AND GO SPINNING DOWNWARDS...



BONINOR SAW THE DESERT LEAPING UP TO MEET THEM. THEN THERE WAS A GRINDING, SPLINTERING CRASH, AND A BONE-SHATTERING IMPACT FOLLOWED BY COMPLETE SILENCE. BONINOR TRIED TO DRAG HIMSELF FROM HIS SEAT, BUT...



HE SAW THAT LAMBERT HAD STRUGGLED OUT, APPARENTLY UNHURT. SUDDENLY A BLINDING SHEET OF FLAME FLASHED ACROSS THE FUSELAGE. LEAKING FUEL HAD BEEN IGNITED BY A SHORTING ELECTRIC CABLE.



ABOVE THE CRACKLING OF THE FLAMES WHICH WERE BEGINNING TO SWEEP THE INSIDE OF THE PLANE, BONNOR HEARD LAMBERT'S VOICE...



SOMEHOW, LAMBERT MANAGED TO FORCE HIS WAY THROUGH THE CURTAIN OF FLAME AND DRAG BONINOR CLEAR.



SECONDS AFTER THEY HAD LEFT THE AIRCRAFT, THERE WAS A DEAFENING EXPLOSION AS ONE OF THE PETROL TANKS BLEW UP. 'BUTCHER' BONINOR WAS FLUNG TO THE GROUND...



DAZED, THE COLONEL STRUGGLED UP. TO HIS HORROR, HE SAW THAT LAMBERT WAS LYING QUITE STILL. HIS UNIFORM SMOKULDERING. DESPERATELY, HE BEAT AT THE FLAMES.



BONINOR MANAGED TO PUT THE FIRE OUT—BUT THEN HE SAW THAT LAMBERT HAD A BAD HEAD INJURY...

GOOD GRIEF /
HE'S DEAD /
HE MUST HAVE
BEEN STRUCK BY
A PIECE OF
FLYING METAL!

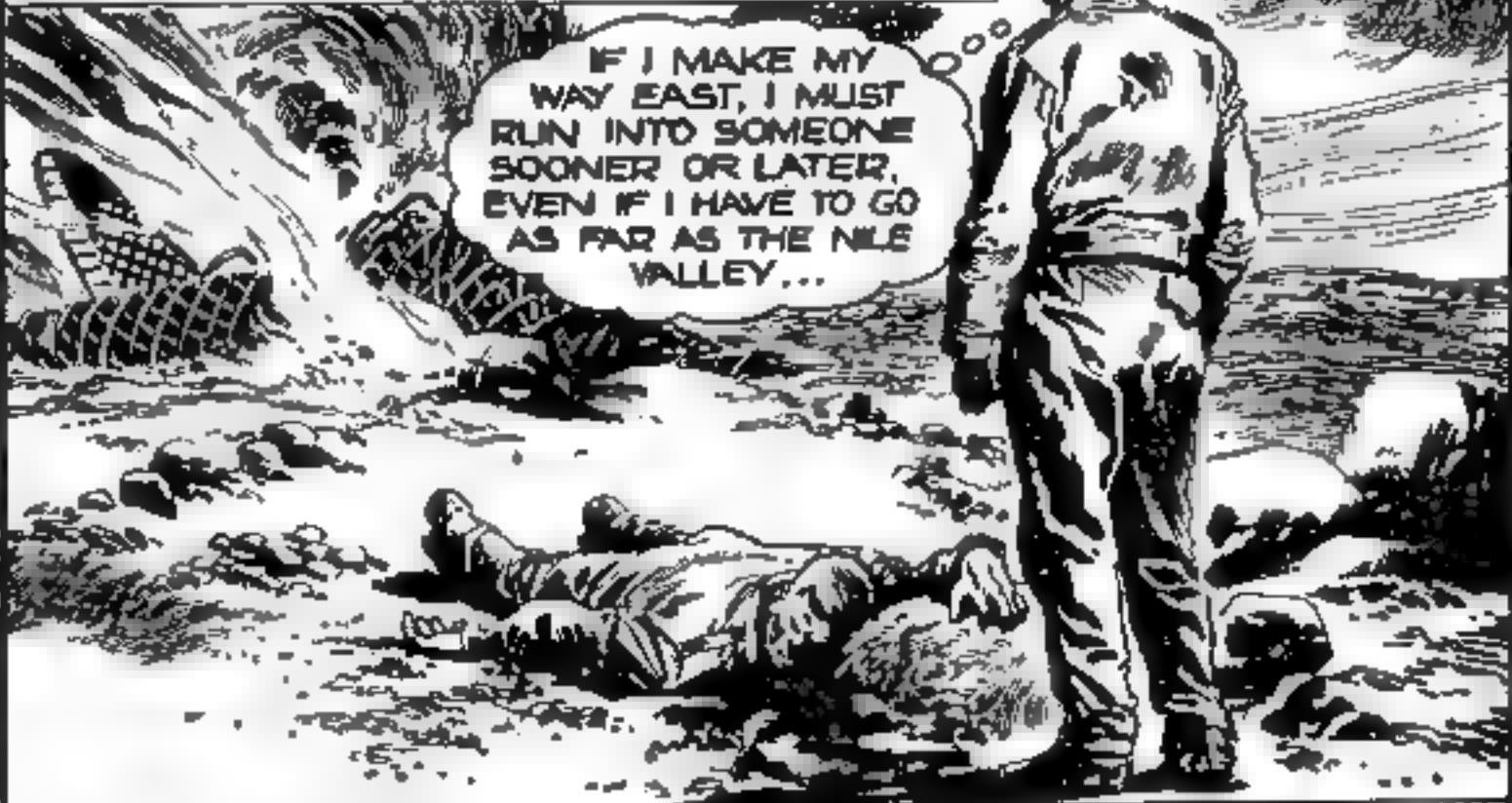


HE WOULD HAVE
BEEN ALIVE NOW IF HE
HADN'T COME BACK TO
RESCUE ME! I OWE MY
LIFE TO HIM!



The Warrior

'BUTCHER' BONNOR SUDDENLY REALISED THE GRIM TRUTH. HE WAS ALONE IN THE DESERT, WITH TWO DEAD MEN AS HIS COMPANIONS...



IF I MAKE MY WAY EAST, I MUST RUN INTO SOMEONE SOONER OR LATER, EVEN IF I HAVE TO GO AS FAR AS THE NILE VALLEY...

IT WAS THEN, AS HE LOOKED DOWN AT THE CRUMPLED FIGURE OF MAJOR LAMBERT, THAT AN IDEA, WILD AND STARTLING, CAME TO THE COLONEL...



LAMBERT WAS GOING TO FIJI, TO RAISE A BATTALION OF FIGHTING MEN. AND I KNOW FIJI AND THE FIJIAN'S ALMOST AS WELL AS HE DID!

THE DEAD MAJOR'S PAYBOOK AND PAPERS WERE STILL IN THE POCKET OF HIS BATTLEDRESS...

SUPPOSE I TOOK ON HIS IDENTITY AND WENT TO FIJI IN HIS PLACE? IF I RAISED AND TRAINED A BATTALION, I'D GET INTO ACTION WITH IT. BUT IF I STAY AS MYSELF, I'LL BE A BASE WALLAH FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE...



NO-ONE WOULD KNOW ME IN THE PACIFIC AREA. 'BUTCHER' BONNOR WILL BE DEAD / LAMBERT HAS NO FAMILY, SAVE A FATHER WHO HASN'T SEEN HIM FOR YEARS... I'LL BE MAJOR ROBERT LAMBERT...



HE KNEW HE WAS TAKING A RISK, BUT RISKS HAD NEVER FRIGHTENED 'BUTCHER' BONNOR. HE CHANGED UNIFORMS AND PAPERS WITH THE DEAD MAN, AND LOOKED DOWN AT LAMBERT FOR THE LAST TIME ...



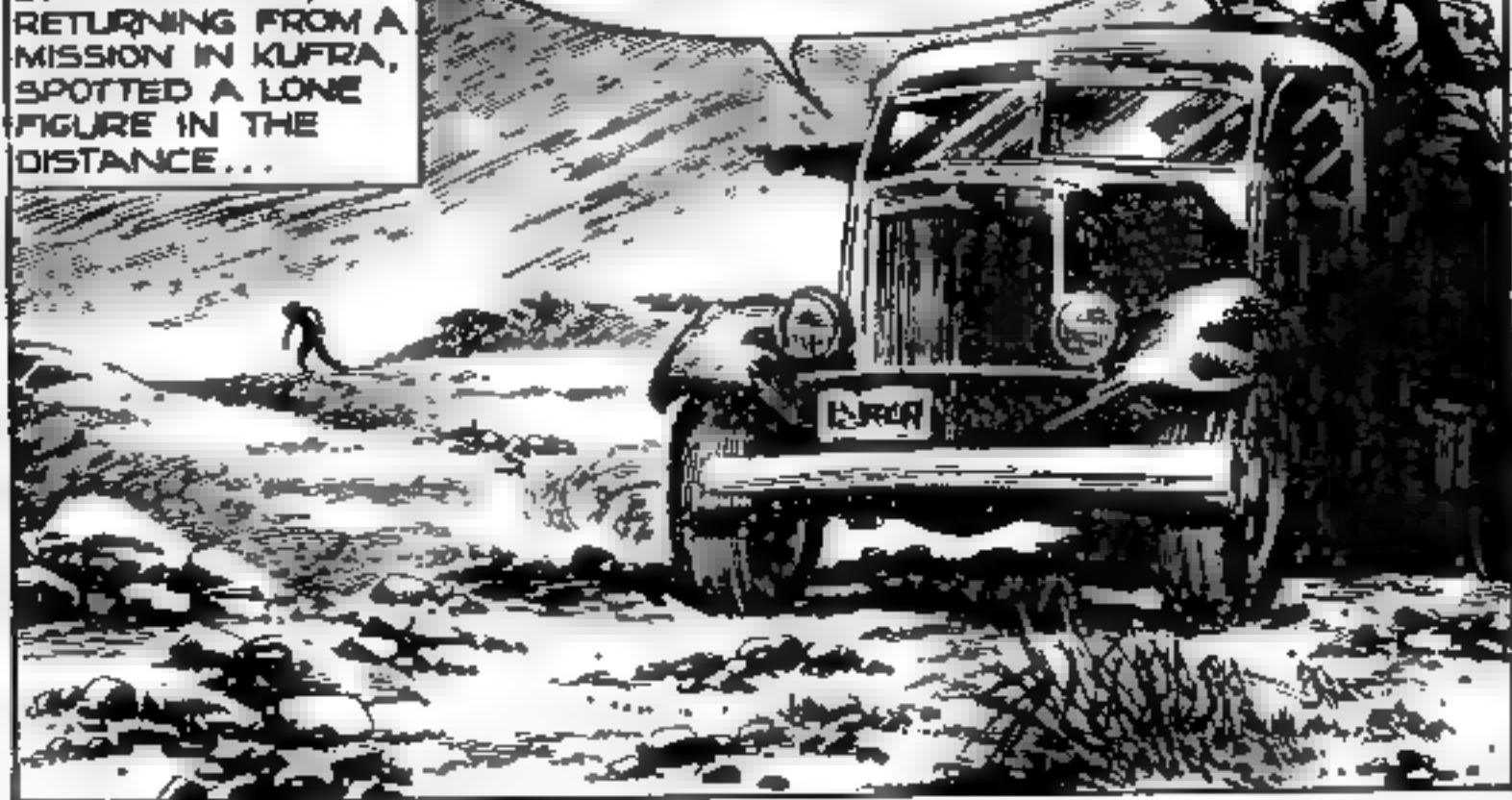
DOGGEDLY THE COLONEL SET HIS FACE TOWARDS THE EAST AND STARTED HIS LONG, LONELY TRUDGE. HIS BRUISED LIMBS ACHED, AND HIS BURNS WERE AGONISING. UNDER THE BLISTERING SUN, EVERY STEP WAS TORTURE ...

I'VE GOT
TO KEEP GOING...
GOT TO!



LATE THAT EVENING,
A TRUCK BELONGING
TO THE LONG-RANGE
DESERT GROUP,
RETURNING FROM A
MISSION IN KUFRA,
SPOTTED A LONE
FIGURE IN THE
DISTANCE...

IT'S ONE OF
OUR CHAPS, BY THE
LOOK OF HIM...



THEY FOUND
THE STAGGERING,
PAIN-WRACKED
FIGURE OF 'MAJOR
LAMBERT'. HE
WAS ALMOST
DEPURIOUS, BUT
HE MANAGED TO
GASP OUT AN
ACCOUNT OF WHAT
HAD HAPPENED...

THE PLANE IS BACK THERE
SOMEWHERE. COLONEL BONINOR
WAS IN IT - HE'S
DEAD / AND
SO IS THE
PILOT...



Chapter 3. The Fuzzies

NEXT DAY, FOUND 'MAJOR LAMBERT' IN ABBASIEH HOSPITAL. THE NURSE WHO BANDAGED HIS FACE NEVER GUessed THAT HE WAS REALLY THE COLONEL BONNOR WHOSE TRAGIC DEATH IN THE DESERT WAS HEADLINE NEWS...



AS BONNOR TRIED TO HURRY PAST, THE OFFICER GRABBED HIM.

HENRY! HENRY BONNOR!
BUT-BUT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD! AND WHAT THE HECK ARE YOU DOING IN A MAJOR'S UNIFORM?



'BUTCHER' BONNOR SAW ALL HIS SCHEMES IN DANGER OF RUIN BY THIS CHANCE ENCOUNTER. THE OFFICER WAS CHARLIE CASSON, WHO HAD SERVED WITH HIM IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR. DESPERATELY, HE APPEALED TO HIM...



COLONEL CASSON LISTENED IN BEWILDERMENT AND AMAZEMENT...

SO THERE YOU HAVE IT, CHARLIE!
YOU RECOGNISED ME BECAUSE YOU'D KNOWN ME FOR YEARS, BUT IT'S NOT LIKELY ANYONE ELSE WILL.



YOU SAVED MY LIFE ONCE, HENRY—AT YPRES.
I WON'T GIVE YOU AWAY AS LONG AS THE WAR LASTS. BUT AFTERWARDS — I DON'T KNOW!
IT'S THE CRAZIEST THING I EVER HEARD OF!

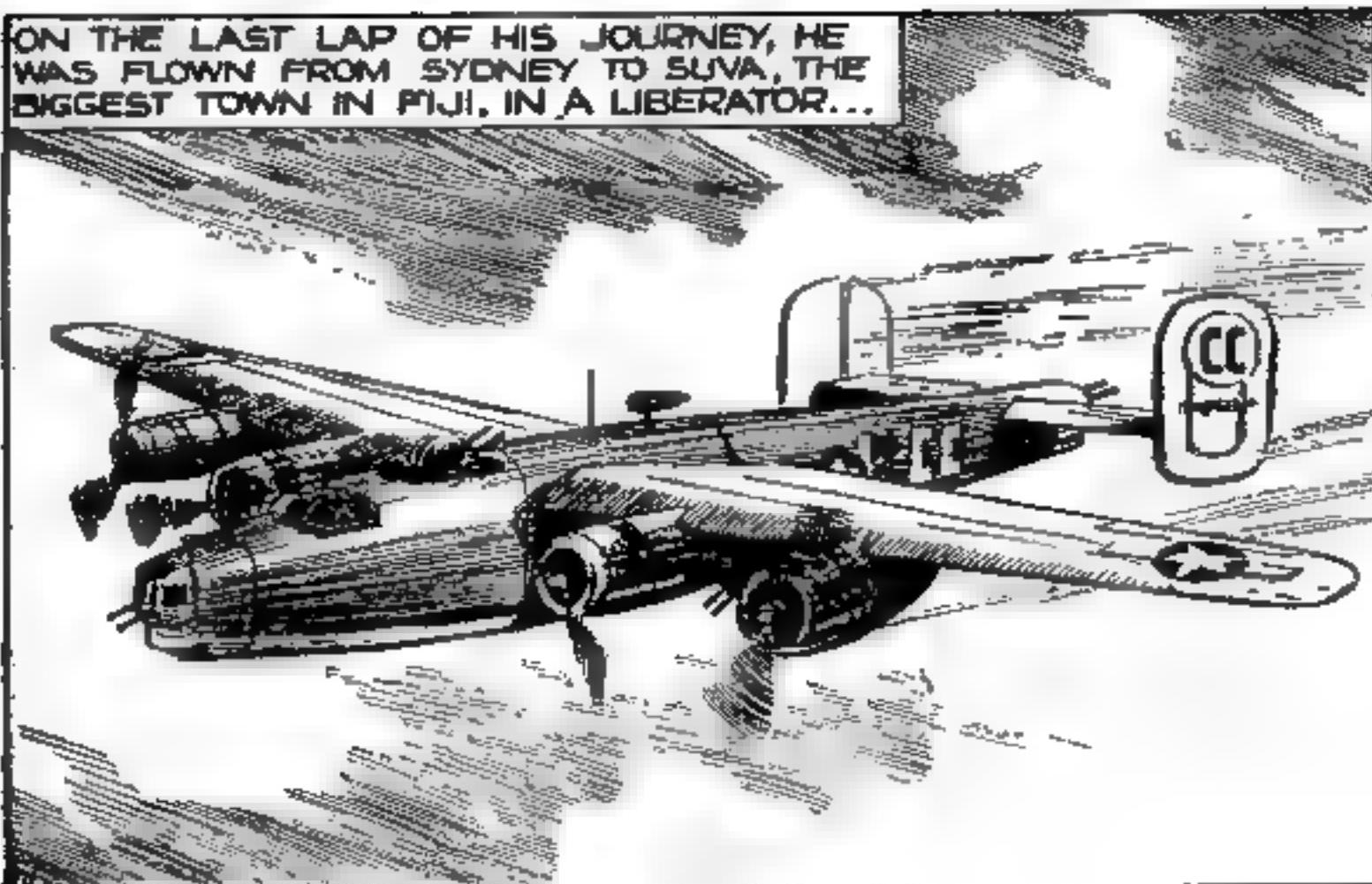
The Warrior

BONINOR'S GREATEST FEAR WAS THAT HE WOULD BE INTRODUCED TO SOMEONE WHO KNEW THE REAL MAJOR LAMBERT. BUT EVERYTHING WENT WELL, AND SOON HE WAS BOARDING A TROOPSHIP BOUND FOR AUSTRALIA - AND FIJI...



THE TESTING
TIME WILL COME WHEN
I LAND IN FIJI. HOPE
THERE'S NO-ONE THERE
WHO KNOWS LAMBERT
TOO WELL!

ON THE LAST LAP OF HIS JOURNEY, HE
WAS FLOWN FROM SYDNEY TO SUVA, THE
BIGGEST TOWN IN FIJI, IN A LIBERATOR...



OLD MEMORIES CAME FLOODING BACK TO HIM AS HE STEPPED OUT ON TO THE AIRFIELD. IT WAS LIKE COMING HOME ...



HE WAS MET BY A YOUNG AUSTRALIAN CAPTAIN ...

MY NAME'S
EDMONDS, SIR! I'M
TO BE YOUR
ADJUTANT.

GLAD TO
MEET YOU,
EDMONDS!



ON THE DRIVE TO THE CAMP, JUST OUTSIDE THE TOWN, CAPTAIN EDMONDS PUT 'MAJOR LAMBERT' IN THE PICTURE.

WE'VE GOT HUNDREDS OF POTENTIAL RECRUITS LINED UP, SIR. IT WILL BE UP TO YOU TO INTERVIEW THEM, PICK OUT THE ONES YOU WANT, AND THEN ORGANISE TRAINING.



THE COLONEL FOUND HIMSELF LIKING THE OUTSPOKEN YOUNG AUSTRALIAN ...

WHAT ABOUT OFFICERS ?

THEY'RE ALL AUSTRALIANS LIKE MYSELF, MAJOR. WE'VE ALL SEEN SERVICE IN NEW GUINEA, SO WE KNOW THE FORM.



THE FIRST THING
'MAJOR LAMBERT'
DID WAS TO MEET
THE OFFICERS.
AT THAT MOMENT
THERE WERE
ONLY TEN OF
THEM, BUT THEIR
NUMBERS WOULD
BE DOUBLED AS
THE BATTALION
TOOK SHAPE...

...THIS IS LIEUTENANT 'SNOWY'
CARSTEN, SIR. HE WAS ONE OF
THE BEST SNIPERS IN NEW
GUINEA.

JUST THE MAN
FOR MUSKETRY
INSTRUCTOR!

'MAJOR LAMBERT' STARTED
THAT DAY TO INTERVIEW EACH
RECRUIT. HE FOUND HE HAD
NO DIFFICULTY AT ALL WITH
THE LANGUAGE . . .

ONCE YOU LEARN
THESE ISLAND DIALECTS,
YOU NEVER FORGET
'EM.

The Warrior

THE NATIVES WERE MUSCULAR AND FIT. ONE MAN IN PARTICULAR IMPRESSED 'THE BUTCHER' WITH HIS CARRIAGE AND PROUD BEARING...



LATER, BONINOR TALKED IT OVER WITH HIS ADJUTANT...



SOON THE BATTALION WAS NEARLY NINE HUNDRED STRONG. 'BUTCHER' BONNOR FELT PRIDE SWELLING IN HIM AS HE WATCHED THEM DRILLING . . .

THEY PICK THINGS UP LIKE BORN SOLDIERS! THEIR TURNOUT WOULDN'T SHAME THE GUARDS!



MANY OF THE FIJIAN'S BECAME CRACK SHOTS . . .

EIGHT BULLS OUT OF TEN SHOTS TO CORPORAL NAMURO, SIR.

EXCELLENT!



NIGHT PATROLS AND SCOUTING
WERE SECOND NATURE TO THEM,
BUT IT WAS BAYONET FIGHTING
THAT THEY ENJOYED MOST...

I HATE THE JAPS
THAT GET IN FRONT
OF THESE MEN!



SIX MONTHS LATER, 'MAJOR LAMBERT' HAD THE BATTALION TRAINED
FOR BATTLE - BUT THEN HE RECEIVED A LETTER FROM THE WAR
OFFICE THAT STUNNED HIM...

THEY WANT TO SEND SOME
COLONEL FROM THE MIDDLE EAST
TO TAKE OVER THE BATTALION!
MY BATTALION!

WHAT ARE
YOU GOING TO
DO ABOUT IT,
SIR?

I'M GOING TO APPEAL
IN PERSON TO THE HIGHEST
AUTHORITY IN THE PACIFIC.
IF I GET HIM ON MY SIDE,
I MAY STAND A CHANCE OF
KEEPING THE BATTALION...



SO 'MAJOR LAMBERT' FLEW TO
BRISBANE AND SAW THE GENERAL
IN CHARGE OF PACIFIC OPERATIONS...

AS AN AMERICAN, MAJOR,
I CAN'T INTERFERE DIRECTLY
IN THIS MATTER. BUT I'LL
USE MY INFLUENCE FOR YOU.
YOU SEEM TO ME TO BE
GETTING A RAW DEAL.



TWO WEEKS LATER 'MAJOR
LAMBERT' RECEIVED ANOTHER
LETTER FROM THE WAR OFFICE...



'YOU ARE TO
HOLD THE TEMPORARY
RANK OF LIEUTENANT
COLONEL, AND WILL
REMAIN IN ACTIVE
COMMAND OF
YOUR UNIT...'



The Warrior

BUT WHEN 'THE FUZZIES' - AS EVERYONE CALLED THEM - EVENTUALLY LANDED AT PORT MORESBY, THE NEW GUINEA BASE, THEY WERE PUT ON ROADMAKING.

PERHAPS THIS IS JUST TO GET THEM ACCLIMATISED. WE OUGHT TO SEE FIGHTING SOON!



SEVERAL TIMES THEY WERE HEAVILY BOMBED, AND BEHAVED WITH SUCH COOLNESS AND INDIFFERENCE TO DANGER THAT 'THE BUTCHER' FELT GROWING ADMIRATION FOR THEM..



BUT THE WEEKS DRAGGED INTO MONTHS, AND STILL THE FIJIAN PRETTED AND LABOURED. THEN KIOGA - NOW THE REGIMENTAL SERGEANT MAJOR - HEADED A DEPUTATION OF N.C.O.s.

WHEN ARE WE GOING TO FIGHT, TALIBADA? WE ARE WARRIORS, NOT LABOURERS!



"BUTCHER" BONNOR HIMSELF WAS FRUSTRATED AND BITTERLY DISAPPOINTED. IN THE END, HE MANAGED TO SEE THE AUSTRALIAN GENERAL IN COMMAND OF THAT SECTOR...

I'VE TRAINED A BODY OF FIRST-CLASS FIGHTING MEN, AND THEY ARE PUT ON WORK THAT COULD BE DONE BY CIVILIANS!

I'M SORRY, COLONEL -
BUT I DON'T TRUST NATIVE TROOPS! IF THEY BROKE UNDER PRESSURE IT COULD LEAD TO DISASTER...

The Warrior

'THE BUTCHER' RETURNED TO HIS UNIT IN A TOWERING RAGE. THEY WERE NOW CAMPED NEAR THE COAST, BUILDING AN AIR-STRIP. THAT NIGHT HE PACED THE BEACH WITH EDMONDS... [REDACTED]

IF THERE WAS ANY WAY OF
TAKING THE BATTALION UP THE
LINE WITHOUT ORDERS AND GETTING
THEM INVOLVED IN THE FIGHTING,
I'D DO IT! BY HEAVENS,
I WOULD!



IT WOULD
MEAN THE
END OF YOUR
CAREER,
SIR!

AS THEY WALKED BACK TO THE CAMP,
LEUTENANT CARSTEN MET THEM,
LOOKING AGITATED...

I'VE GOT SOME
BAD NEWS FOR YOU, SIR.
SERGEANT-MAJOR KIOGA
HAS DESERTED! GONE
BUSH!

KIOGA!
GOOD GRIEF!



KIOGA
WAS THE BEST
MAN WE HAD!
WHY THE DEVIL
DID HE DO
IT?

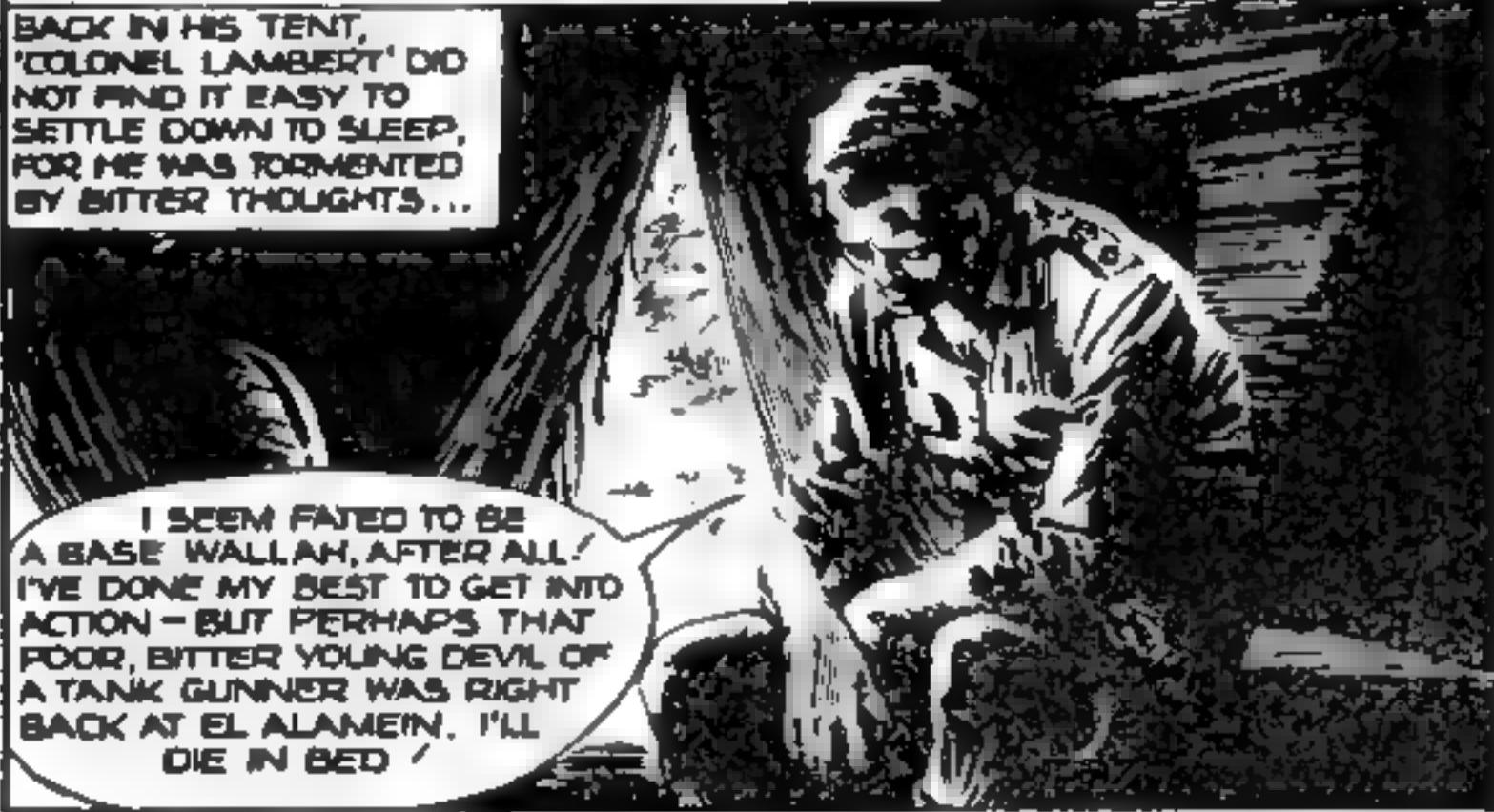
HE'S
BROWNEED OFF,
SIR. THEY ALL
ARE. THEY WANT
TO SEE ACTION.

HE'S A
PROUD MAN, AND
HE WOULDN'T HAVE LEFT
HIS VILLAGE IF HE'D THOUGHT
HE WAS GOING TO BE A
LABOURER!



Chapter 4. Path to Glory

BACK IN HIS TENT, 'COLONEL LAMBERT' DID NOT FIND IT EASY TO SETTLE DOWN TO SLEEP, FOR HE WAS TORMENTED BY BITTER THOUGHTS...



I SEEM FATED TO BE
A BASE WALLAH, AFTER ALL!
I'VE DONE MY BEST TO GET INTO
ACTION - BUT PERHAPS THAT
POOR, BITTER YOUNG DEVIL OF
A TANK GUNNER WAS RIGHT
BACK AT EL ALAMEIN. I'LL
DIE IN BED!

HE WAS STILL RESTLESS AN HOUR LATER WHEN HE HEARD THE RUSTLE
OF MOVEMENT. A SHADOW FILLED THE TENT OPENING.



KIOGA!
SO YOU'VE
COME
BACK!

KIOGA BEGAN TO SPEAK EXCITEDLY AND AS THE TORRENT OF WORDS POURED FROM HIM, 'BUTCHER' BONINOR STRAIGHTENED UP WITH A JERK, ALL HIS NERVES TINGLING...



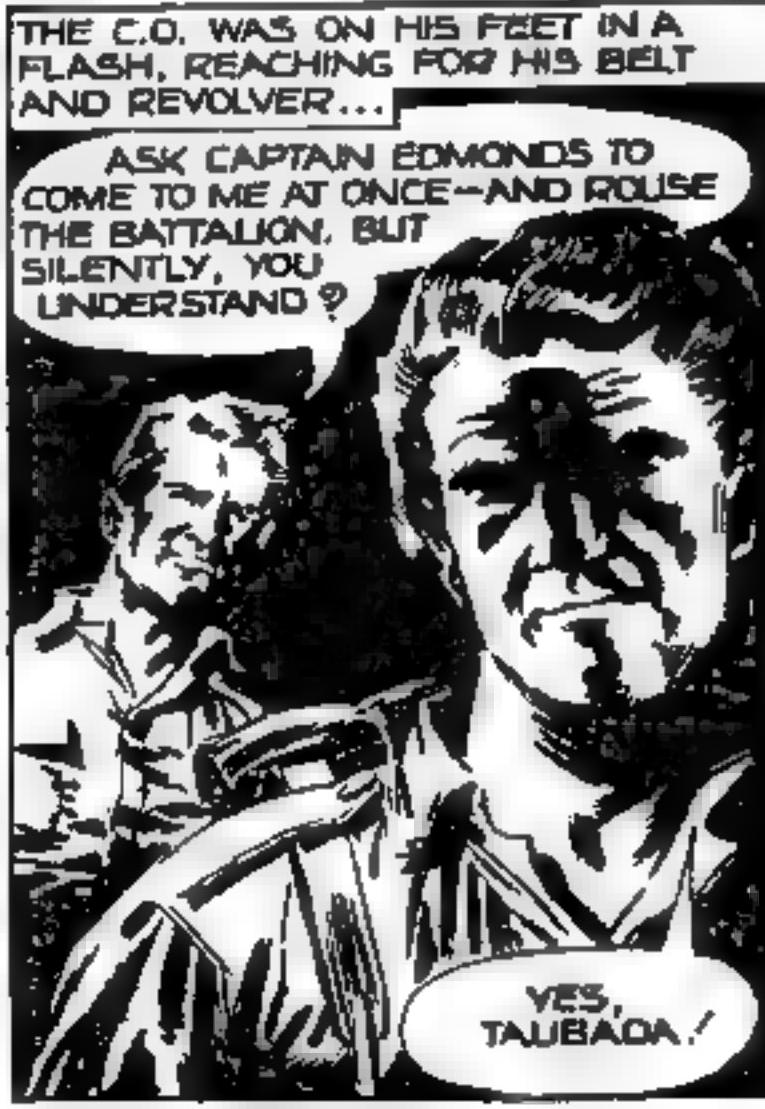
THEY COME,
TAUBADA. THE LITTLE
YELLOW MEN - FROM
THE SEA / THEY HAVE
THEIR BOATS - IN THE
NEXT BAY...

KIOGA'S EXCITED FACE WAS ALIGHT
WITH A NEW KEENNESS...



THE JAPANESE?
HOW DO YOU
KNOW?

I WAS ON MY
WAY TO FIND FIGHTING,
TAUBADA. I COULD NOT
STAY HERE ANY LONGER.
BUT AS I CAME ON TO THE
TOP OF THE CLIFFS IN THE
NEXT BAY I SAW THE
LANDING CRAFT. MANY
BOATS. BUT THEY ARE
HAVING MUCH TROUBLE
ON THE REEF...



THE C.O. WAS ON HIS FEET IN A
FLASH, REACHING FOR HIS BELT
AND REVOLVER...

ASK CAPTAIN EDMONDS TO
COME TO ME AT ONCE - AND ROUSE
THE BATTALION. BUT
SILENTLY, YOU
UNDERSTAND?

YES,
TAUBADA!

SOON, 'COLONEL LAMBERT' WAS
SPEARING HIS OFFICERS...



BY LANDING A STRONG
FORCE IN A SOFT REAR AREA, THE
JAPS ARE HOPING TO TAKE US BY
SURPRISE. I'VE ALREADY SENT A
RUNNER WITH THE NEWS TO THE
AUSTRALIANS. BUT IN THE
MEANTIME, WE ARE THE NEAREST
FIGHTING UNIT. IT'S UP TO US!

SILENTLY, SWIFTLY, THE FIJIAN SUPPED
THROUGH THE JUNGLE AND BEGAN TO
CLOSE IN FROM THREE DIRECTIONS
ON THE BAY...



BONNOR HIMSELF LED ONE
OF THE COLUMNNS...

The Warrior

SOON THEY REACHED THE EDGE OF THE SCRUB-COVERED CLIFFS THAT FRINGED THE COVE.

KIOGA WAS RIGHT! THE JAPS ARE HAVING TROUBLE FROM A WAY THROUGH THE REEF, AND THE STRONG TIDE IS AGAINST THEM.



LUCKY
FOR US, SIR!
OTHERWISE WE
SHOULD NEVER HAVE
GOT HERE IN
TIME

THE LEADING JAPS
WERE SCRAMBLING UP THE CLIFF FACE
WHEN 'COLONEL
LAMBERT' FIRED A
RED ROCKET - THE
AGREED SIGNAL.
AS IT CURVED AND
BURST, GLOWING, IN
THE STILL AIR, THE
ATTACKERS
HALTED
MOMENTARILY.

WE HAVE BEEN
SEEN, CAPTAIN
SAN!



NEXT MOMENT, THE SILENCE OF
THE NIGHT WAS SHATTERED BY
A TREMENDOUS BURST OF RIFLE
AND BREN-GUN FIRE. THE
LEADING RANKS OF THE JAPS
WERE SWEEPED LIKE FLIES FROM
THE CLIFF FACE . . .



A MURDEROUS VOLUME OF FIRE, RISING TO A FURIOUS CRESCENDÒ, NOW LASHED THE BEACH AND THE PACKED LANDING CRAFT...



IN VAIN, THE JAPANESE OFFICERS TRIED TO REFORM THEIR MEN, BUT THE DEADLY HAIL OF BULLETS WAS SCYTHING GREAT SWATHES IN THEIR RANKS

FORWARD,
YOU COWARDLY
DOGS ! FOR THE
HONOUR OF THE
EMPEROR...



THE JAPS WHO HAD NOT YET LANDED
WERE TRAPPED. AS THEY TRIED TO
SCRAMBLE ASHORE, JOSTLING AND
SHOUTING, THEY WERE CUT DOWN...



'THE BUTCHER' NOW FIRED A SECOND
ROCKET, AND AS IT EXPLODED,
SCATTERING CRIMSON SPARKS, THE
WHOLE FIJIAN BATTALION ROSE
FROM COVER AND WENT SLIDING
AND LEAPING DOWN THE CLIFF...

ATTACK!
ATTACK!



The Warrior

NOTHING COULD STOP THE IMPETUS
OF THAT DEATH-DEFYING CHARGE

COME ON,
MY BROTHERS!
THIS IS WHAT YOU
WANTED!



THOSE BARGES WHICH HAD NOT YET LANDED, TURNED BACK, THE OTHER JAPS, PENNED IN THE KILLING GROUND OF THE BEACH, WERE WIPE OUT...



BY THE TIME TWO AUSTRALIAN COMPANIES ARRIVED, THE BATTLE WAS OVER. IN THE GREY DAWN, THE AUSSIES STARED IN AMAZEMENT AT THE SCENE...

STONE THE CROWS / LOOK AT THIS !

THESE FUZZIES KNOW HOW TO FIGHT. MY COLONIAL OATH !



Chapter 5. Sounds of Battle

FROM THAT MOMENT, THE FAME OF THE FIJIAN BATTALION WAS ASSURED AND 'COLONEL LAMBERT' WENT ONCE AGAIN TO SEE THE AUSTRALIAN GENERAL.

HOW CAN I REFUSE, COLONEL? YOU'VE PROVED YOUR POINT!

SURELY, SIR, AFTER THIS, YOU'LL LET MY MEN TAKE THEIR PLACE IN THE LINE?

A WEEK LATER, THE FIJIANS RELIEVED AN AUSTRALIAN BATTALION IN A VITAL SECTOR...

SAY, LOOK AT THESE BLOKES! WHO ARE THEY?

THE FUZZIES FROM FIJI FAIR DINKUM FIGHTERS!

EVENTUALLY, JAP SCOUTS DISCOVERED THAT THE FIJIAN WERE IN THE LINE, AND THE ENEMY CORPS COMMANDER PLANNED A TERRIBLE REVENGE ON THESE NATIVE TROOPS WHO HAD HUMILIATED HIS MEN.



THE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON, A DESULTORY SHELLING AND MORTARS BEGAN TO POUND THE FIJIAN FOXHOLES. BUTCHER BONNOR WAS QUICK TO NOTICE SOMETHING SIGNIFICANT ABOUT IT.

THOSE AREN'T THE SAME BATTERIES FIRING ON OUR LINE, EDMOND'S / THEY ARE DIFFERENT BATTERIES, TAKING IT IN TURNS TO REGISTER. YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS ?





THEY ARE PREPARING
A CONCENTRATED AND HEAVY
BOMBARDMENT FROM A
SCORE OF FRESH BATTERIES
THAT MUST HAVE BEEN SET
UP. THAT MEANS AN
ATTACK - PROBABLY TONIGHT!



YOU MEAN—
PULL THEM BACK,
SIR?

THE ADJUTANT SPOKE
INcredulously...

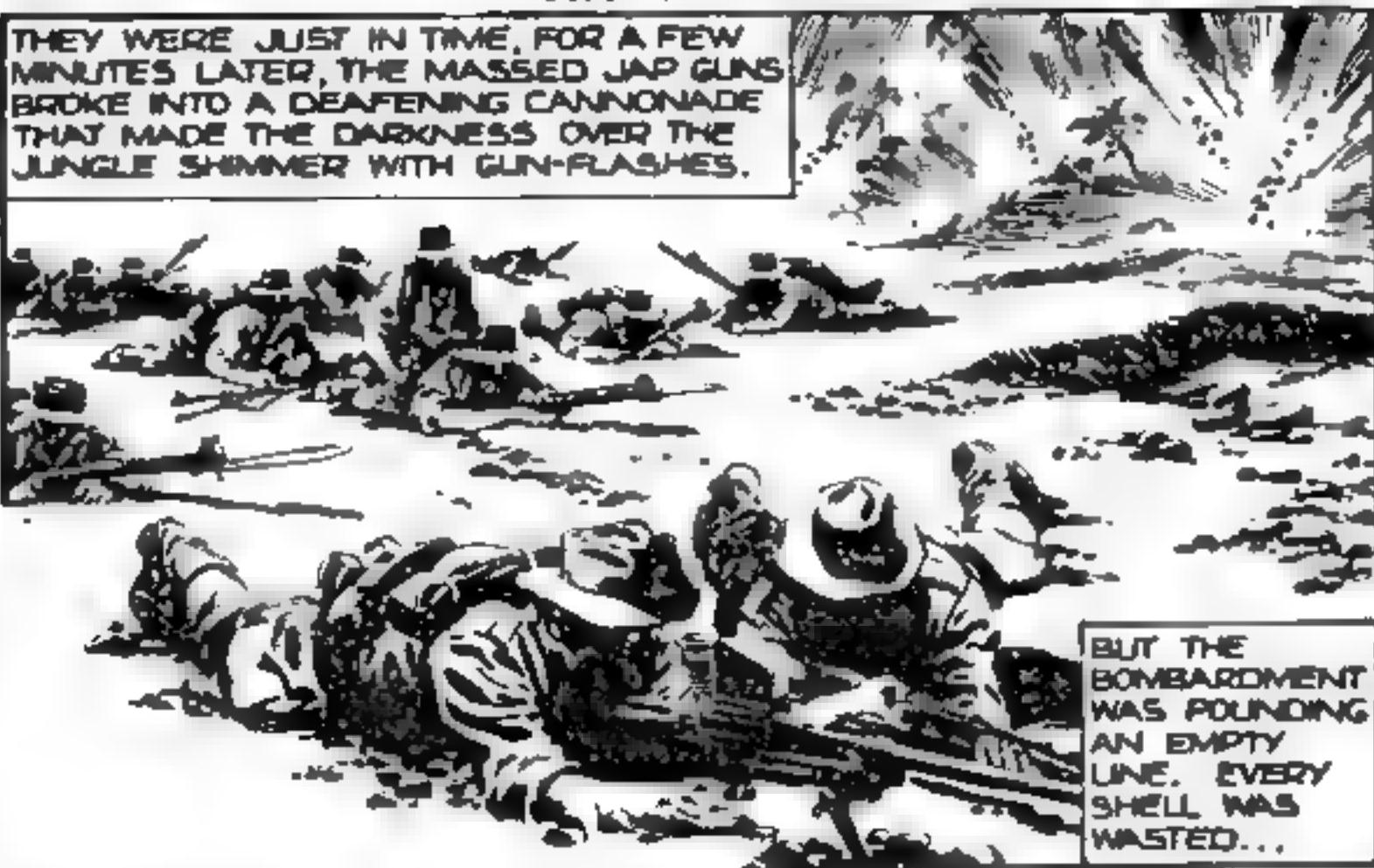
WITHDRAW THEM?
OF COURSE NOT!
WE'LL TAKE THEM
FORWARD INTO NO
MAN'S LAND, CLOSER
TO THE ENEMY!



SO AS SOON AS IT WAS DARK THE FIJIAN
LEFT THEIR PITS AND FOXHOLES AND
SLIPPED INTO NO MAN'S LAND.



THEY WERE JUST IN TIME, FOR A FEW MINUTES LATER, THE MASSED JAP GUNS BROKE INTO A DEAFENING CANNONADE THAT MADE THE DARKNESS OVER THE JUNGLE SHIMMER WITH GUN-FLASHES.



THE BOMBARDMENT DIED AS SUDDENLY AS IT HAD BEGUN AND THE HIROHITO REGIMENT — THE FLOWER OF THE JAPANESE ARMY IN NEW GUINEA — CHARGED.



THEN THE NIGHT WAS SHOT WITH FLAME AND THUNDER AS THE FIJANS OPENED UP . . .



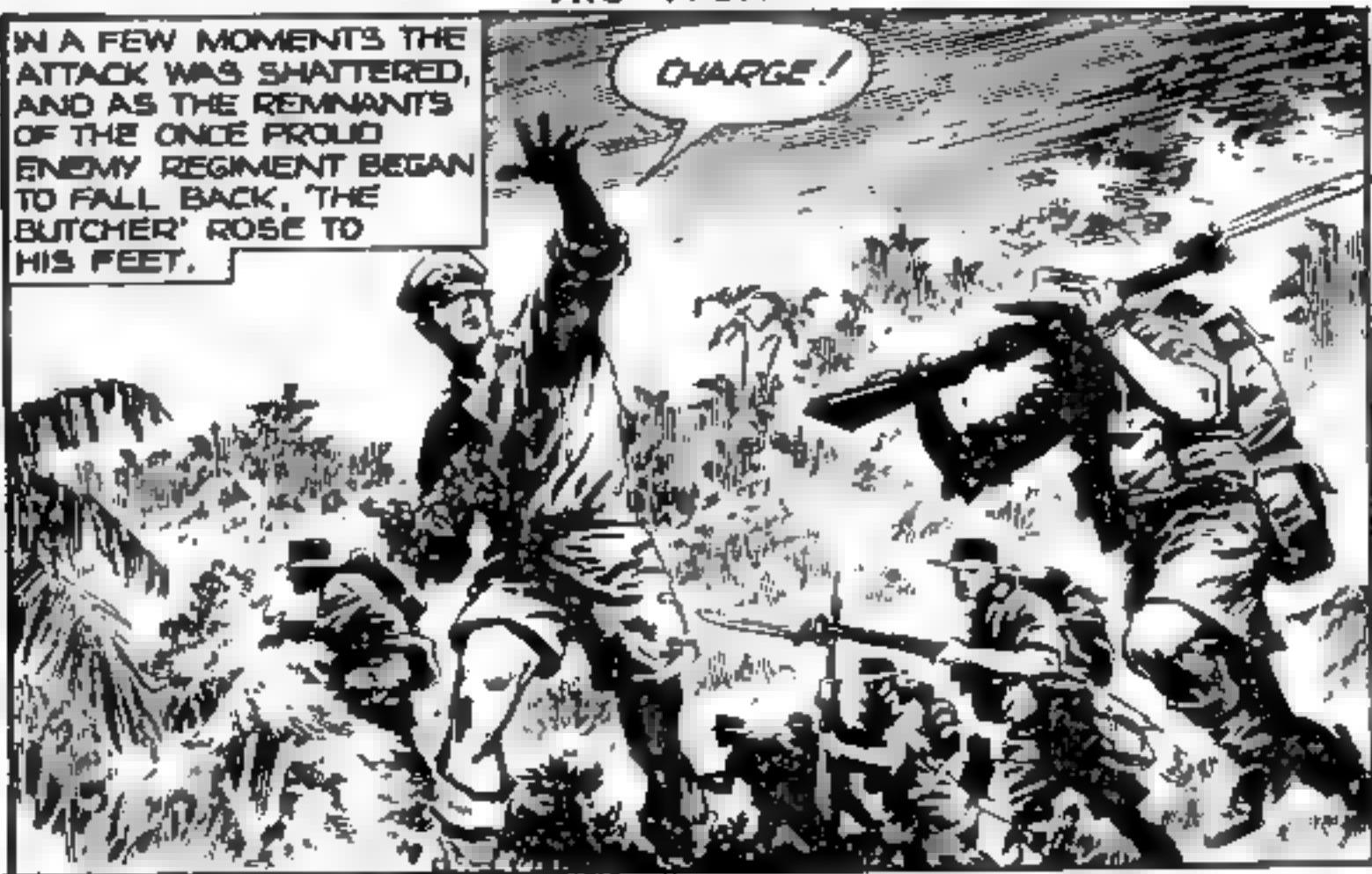
UNDER THAT HURRICANE OF LEAD, THE LEADING JAPS WERE SMASHED INTO THE GROUND . . .

THE ATTACKERS HAD BEEN EXPECTING ONLY SLIGHT RESISTANCE FROM A FEW SHELL-STUNNED SURVIVORS. INSTEAD, THEY WERE MET BY MURDEROUS POINT-BLANK FIRE.



IN A FEW MOMENTS THE ATTACK WAS SHATTERED, AND AS THE REMNANTS OF THE ONCE PROUD ENEMY REGIMENT BEGAN TO FALL BACK, 'THE BUTCHER' ROSE TO HIS FEET.

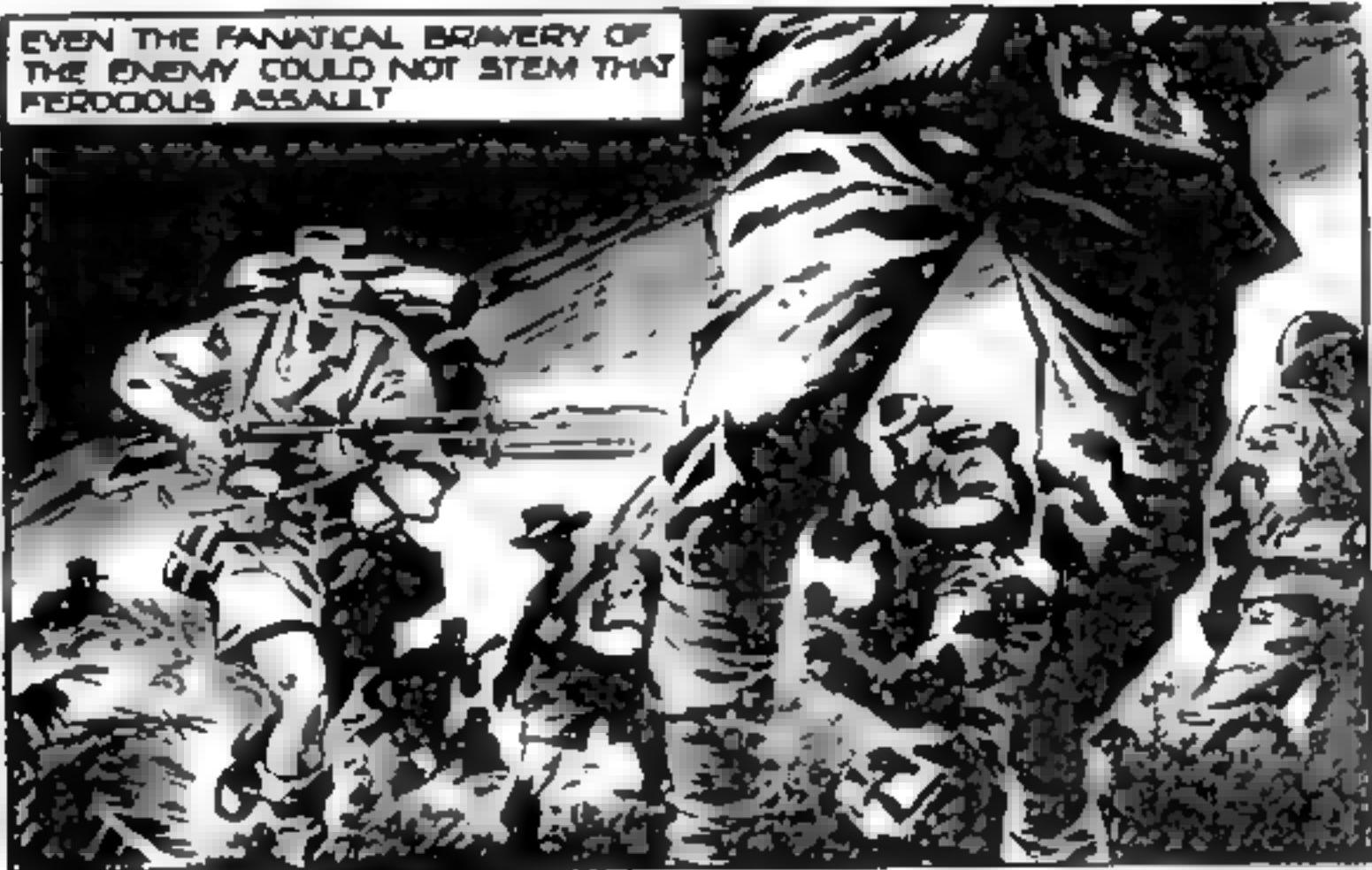
CHARGE!



THE FIJIAN WARRIORS GAVE A DEEP-THROATED ROAR AND LEAPT FORWARD, BAYONETS GLINTING IN THE STARLIGHT. YOUNGER, FASTER THAN THEIR CO. THEY SWEEP PAST AND BEYOND HIM.



EVEN THE FANATICAL BRAVERY OF
THE ENEMY COULD NOT STEM THAT
FEROCIOUS ASSAULT



SO FAST AND FAR DID THEY GO
THAT THEY WERE IN THE
JAPANESE BATTALION HEAD-
QUARTERS BEFORE THEIR WHITE
OFFICERS COULD STOP THEM

ENOUGH! IT IS
TIME TO WITHDRAW,
MY BROTHERS!



The Warrior

AS THE FIJIANS RELUCTANTLY CAME BACK, BRINGING THEIR WOUNDED WITH THEM, 'BUTCHER' BONNOR WATCHED THEM WITH PRIDE.



IN ONE FIERCE ACTION AFTER ANOTHER, THE FIJIANS GAINED CUNNING AND BATTLE EXPERIENCE TO ADD TO THEIR GALLANTRY AND DASH. SOON THEY BECAME A LEGEND...



HERE COME THE FUZZIES / STONE THE CROWS, THIS IS BAD NEWS FOR THE NIPS / WAIT TILL THESE BLOKES GET IN AMONG 'EM!

IN THE VITAL FINCHAVEN ATTACK
THEY WERE GIVEN THE HONOUR
OF STORMING THE STRONGEST
PART OF THE JAPANESE HILL
POSITION.

BY THUNDER!
THE FUZZIES HAVE
TAKEN THE RIDGE!
NOW THE WHOLE LINE
WILL BE ABLE TO
ADVANCE .



The Warrior

BUT IT WAS AFTER THIS ATTACK THAT 'BUTCHER' BONNOR OVERHEARD TWO AUSTRALIANS OF A NEIGHBOURING BATTALION TALKING...



'BUTCHER' BONNOR'S MOUTH TIGHTENED BITTERLY. IT WAS THE OLD JIBE!



HIS CHANCE SOON CAME. THE FIJIAN WERE GIVEN A JAP STRONGPOINT KNOWN AS KANGAROO HILL AS THEIR NEXT OBJECTIVE.



THE C.O.'S BELLOW OF RAGE
MADE EDMONDS JUMP...

ARE YOU
TELLING ME
WHAT MY DUTY
IS, CAPTAIN?
I GIVE THE
ORDERS
IN THIS
BATTALION!



THIS TIME, ARTILLERY
SUPPORT HAD BEEN
WEAK, AND AS THE
FIJIAN SWEPT UP
KANGAROO HILL, THEY
CAME UNDER MURDEROUS
CROSSFIRE FROM THE
ENEMY. FOR ONCE THEY
WAVERED - AND 'BUTCHER'
BONINOR SPRANG
FORWARD...

COME ON,
MY BROTHERS!
FOLLOW ME!



The Warrior

FIVE YARDS FROM THE CREST, A BULLET IN THE THIGH STAGGERED HIM, BUT HE KEPT ON. AT POINT-BLANK RANGE HE SHOT TWO MACHINE-GUNNERS ...



ANOTHER BULLET CAUGHT HIM IN THE CHEST, AND HE FELL. AS HE WENT DOWN, SERGEANT-MAJOR KIOGA AND SEVERAL OTHER MEN GAVE A GREAT ROAR OF FURY...



FOR LONG, VIOLENT
MINUTES, THE BATTLE
RAGED OVER THE
FALLEN COLONEL...



THEN, WITH ONE LAST FIERCE RUSH,
THE GIANT FIJIAN SWEPT THE
JAPS FROM THE CREST.



The Warrior

AFTERWARDS, SERGEANT-MAJOR KIOGA FOUND THAT THEIR BELOVED C.O. WAS STILL ALIVE, AND HE AND ANOTHER MAN GENTLY CARRIED HIM BACK...

CAREFUL,
CLUMSY ONE / YOU
JARRED HIM
THEN /



BACK AT THE FIRST-AID POST
THEY SAID FAREWELL TO
'COLONEL LAMBERT'...

COME BACK TO US, OLD
WARRIOR! WITHOUT YOU, WE
ARE AS CHILDREN WITHOUT
A FATHER!



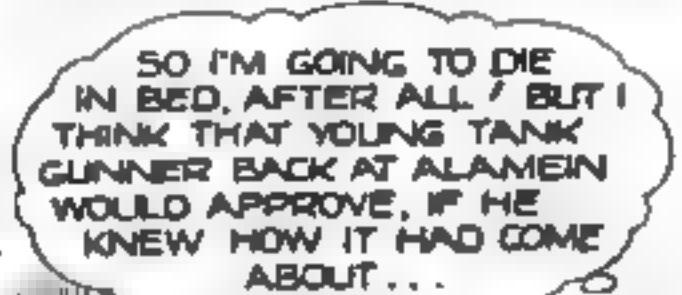
EVENTUALLY, 'BUTCHER' BONNOR WAS CARRIED INTO A DAKOTA AND FLOWN WITH OTHER WOUNDED TO SYDNEY.



IN THE HOSPITAL THERE, THEY DID THEIR BEST FOR 'COLONEL LAMBERT'. BUT HIS WOUNDS WERE TOO SEVERE. ONCE, WHEN THEY THOUGHT HE WAS ASLEEP, HE HEARD TWO NURSES TALKING...



COLONEL BONNOR'S LIPS TWISTED SARDONICALLY



THEN A NURSE CAME - WITH A FRAIL,
WHITE-HAIRED OLD MAN ...

COLONEL LAMBERT -
HERE IS YOUR FATHER!
HE HAS FLOWN ALL THE
WAY FROM ENGLAND
TO SEE YOU!



IT TOOK
'BUTCHER'
BONINOR A FEW
CONFUSED
MOMENTS TO
REALISE THAT
THE VISITOR
WAS THE REAL
ROBERT
LAMBERT'S
FATHER -
COLONEL
ASHTON
LAMBERT, D.S.O.

GOOD GRIEF!
HE'LL SEE AT ONCE,
I'M NOT HIS SON!
WELL, THE TRUTH
MAY AS WELL
COME OUT...



THEN HE REALISED THAT
COLONEL ASHTON LAMBERT
WAS ALMOST BLIND!



IT WAS THE FIRST COLONEL 'BUTCHER' BONNOR HAD HEARD ABOUT THE V.C., AND HE COULD ONLY STARE INCREDULOUSLY WHILST HIS 'FATHER' GRIPPED HIS HAND.



The Warrior

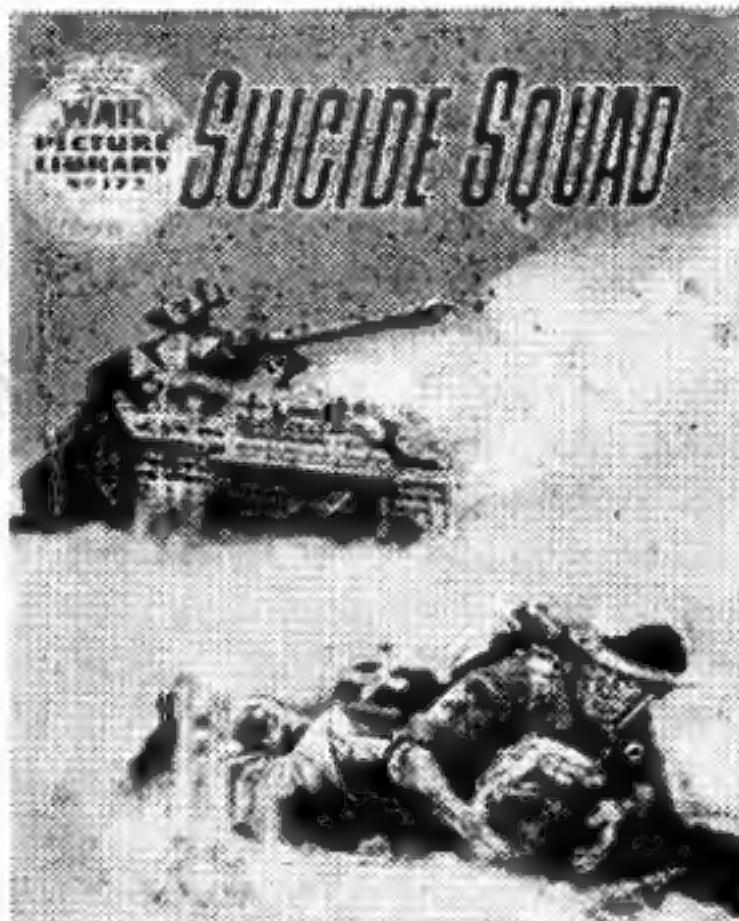
'BUTCHER' BONNOR REALISED THEN THAT HE COULD NOT TELL THE OLD GENTLEMAN THE TRUTH - THAT HE WAS NOT HIS SON. THAT MUCH HE OWED TO THE REAL ROBERT LAMBERT, WHO HAD GIVEN HIS LIFE FOR HIM IN THE DESERT.



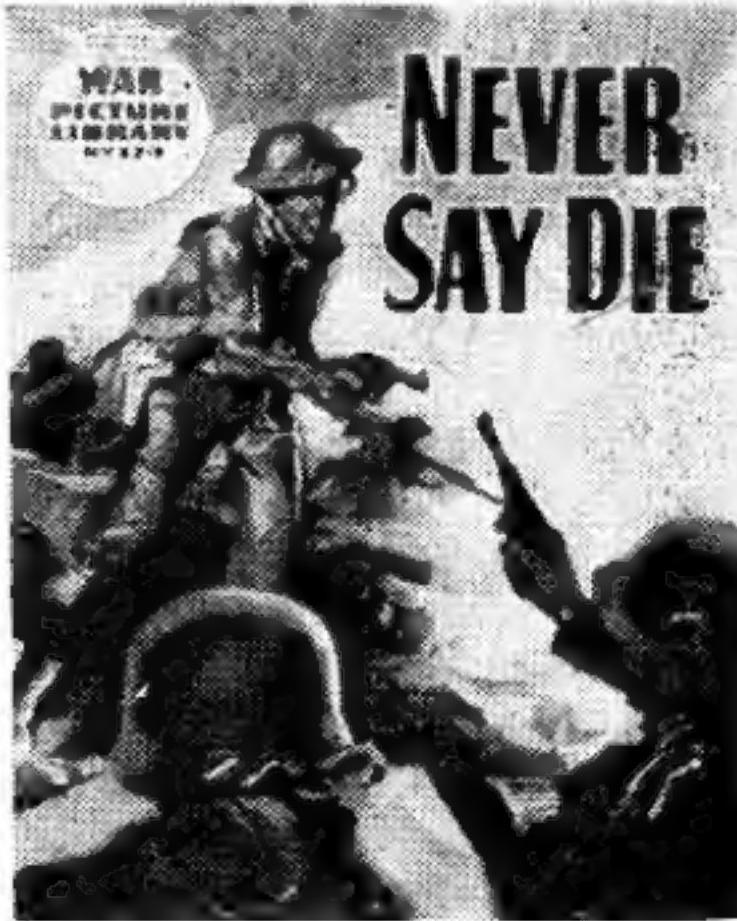
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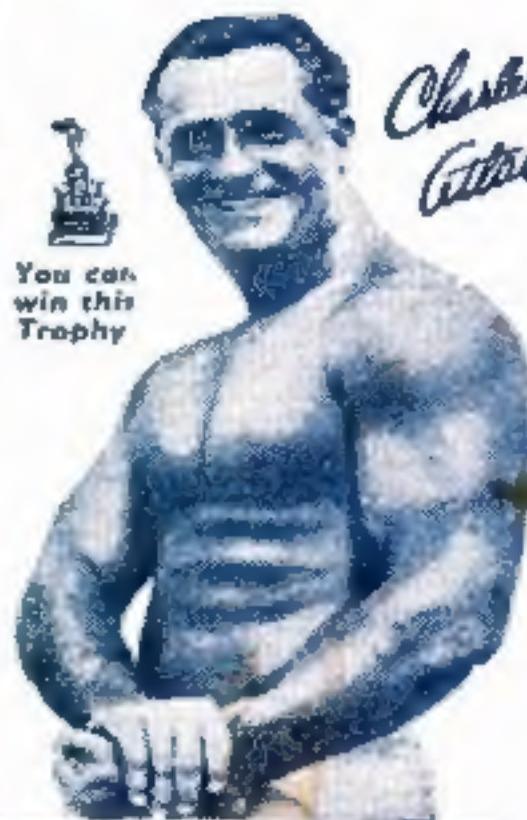
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